

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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TAGS: ILO, ELAB
SUBJECT: ILO 1978 CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 127537

1. CHARGE DISCUSSED CONTENTS OF REFERENCE INSTRUCTIONS
MAY 30 WITH MINISTER OF LABOR ALIOUNE DIAGNE AND ON MAY 31
WITH BABACAR DIAGNE, PRESIDENT OF CNTS (NATIONAL
CONFEDERATION OF SENEGALESE WORKERS). LEFT AIDE MEMOIRE
DETAILING US POSITION WITH BOTH OFFICIALS. BOTH SENEGALESE
LABOR LEADERS RESPONDED POSITIVELY, EXPRESSING HOPE THAT
US WOULD REJOIN ILO AND BELIEF THAT POLITICIZATION OF ILO HAD
ALREADY PEAKED, AND THAT FUTURE WOULD SEE ORGANIZATION
RETURNING TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES WHICH
CONSTITUTE ITS ORIGINAL MANDATE.

2. FOR MINISTER OF LABOR ALIOUNE DIAGNE, WHO WILL BE
CHAIRMAN OF SENEGALESE DELEGATION, THIS WILL BE FIRST ILO
CONFERENCE. HE BECAME LABOR MINISTER IN MARCH 1978
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CABINET RESUFFLE FOLLOWING SENEGALESE ELECTIONS.
FORMERLY SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE GOVERNMENT, DIAGNE
HAS HAD A LONG CAREER IN HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICES. HE
SAID SENEGAL'S BEHAVIOR AT ILO CONFERENCE WOULD BE
BASED ON THREE PRINCIPLES OF RESPECT FOR NATIONAL
SOVEREIGNTY, PROMOTION OF DIALOGUE AMONG MEMBERS, AND
MEASURES TO RENDER ILO MORE EFFECTIVE. WITH RESPECT TO

US, HE WOULD LIKE TO ADD A FOURTH MAJOR PRINCIPLE, UNIVERSALITY. ALIOUNE DIAGNE REGRETTED US NO LONGER PRESENT IN ILO; OUR ABSENCE MADE PRINCIPLE OF UNIVERSALITY IMPOSSIBLE. LACK OF US FINANCIAL SUPPORT WAS ALSO SERIOUSLY AFFECTING ILO ABILITY TO CARRY OUT ITS PROGRAMS.

3. LABOR MINISTER DIAGNE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR EMBASSY'S DETAILED AIDE MEMOIRE WHICH HE SAID HE WOULD STUDY AND CONSIDER CAREFULLY. HE HAD BEEN LABOR MINISTER FOR ONLY JUST OVER TWO MONTHS NOW AND WAS STILL LEARNING HIS DOSSIERS.

4. ALIOUNE DIAGNE'S NAMESAKE, BABACAR DIAGNE, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF SENEGALESE WORKERS (CNTS) VETERAN FIGURE OF SENEGALESE LABOR AFFAIRS, WAS COMPLETELY CONVERSANT WITH ALL MAJOR ISSUES RAISED IN REFTEL. HE SAID THIS WILL BE HIS SIXTH ILO CONFERENCE. BABACAR DIAGNE SAID US WAS GREATLY MISSED IN ILO BECAUSE OF ITS BROAD EXPERIENCE IN LABOR AFFAIRS AND ITS COMMITMENT TO WORKERS IMPROVEMENT AND TRAINING. AFRICA, AS THE PRIME BENEFICIARY OF ILO TRAINING AND OTHER PROGRAMS, PARTICULARLY FELT A LACK OF US PRESENCE.

5. ON SPECIFIC ISSUES, BABACAR DIAGNE THOUGHT THAT THE TREND TOWARDS POLITICIZATION WHICH RESULTED IN US WITHDRAWAL HAD ALREADY PEAKED AND THAT MEMBERS WERE NOW LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WILLING TO RETURN TO THE MORE TRADITIONAL CONCERNS OF THE ILO, AND TO RESPECT ILO'S OWN INTERNAL RULES. HE ALSO EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT DG HAD BEEN ABLE TO ARRANGE SPECIAL MISSION TO ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, SAYING THIS IS WAY SITUATION SHOULD HAVE BEEN HANDLED IN FIRST PLACE. BABACAR DIAGNE ALSO AGREED ON NEED FOR AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 17, REMARKING THAT NO ILO MEMBER SHOULD BE JUDGED, CONDEMNED, OR CENSORED WITHOUT FULL INQUIRY AND OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK. ON QUESTION OF SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF GOVERNING BODY, DIAGNE WAS LESS SYMPATHETIC TO US VIEWPOINT. HE SAID THIS WAS MATTER FOR DISCUSSION, BUT NON-PERMANENT MEMBERS OF GOVERNING BODY FELT STRONGLY THEY WERE NOT GETTING FAIR AND EQUAL TREATMENT.

6. SURVEYING THE AFRICAN LABOR SCENE, BABACAR DIAGNE SAID RECENT POLITICAL UPHEAVALS IN AF COUNTRIES, REMOVAL FROM THE SCENE OF SEVERAL AFRICAN LABOR LEADERS, AND ARAB/AFRICAN FRICTIONS WOULD PRACTICALLY GUARANTEE SERIES OF FIRST CLASS ROWS OVER AFRICAN SEATS IN ILO GOVERNING BODY.

7. BABACAR DIAGNE ASKED IF US WOULD BE REPRESENTED BY OBSERVE DELEGATION AT JUNE ILO CONFERENCE, AND IF SO,

WHO WOULD BE ON DELEGATION. PLEASE ADVISE. IN ALL
EVENTS, RECOMMEND BOTH DIAGNES, ESPECIALLY BABACAR, AS
EXCELLENT CONTACTS FOR US OFFICIALS AT GENEVA.
GALANTO

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